

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2003

**Stop the Senseless Deaths Due to  
Cigarette Ignited Fires  
Be an Original Co-Sponsor of 'The Moakley Memorial Fire-  
Safe Cigarette Act of 2003'**

Dear Colleague:

- ❖ On May 22, 2001 at 9 a.m. the fire department was called to an apartment fire in Salt Lake City, UT caused by an abandoned cigarette in the bedroom. A 24- year old mother and her three children, ages 1 to 5, died in the blaze. Another child was seriously injured.
- ❖ On January 20, 2003 in Medford, Massachusetts a fire killed a 20-year-old Tufts University student. The fire was probably the result of a discarded cigarette.
- ❖ On January 3, 2001 a wildfire destroyed at least 4 homes, 10,500 acres of land and caused the evacuation of about 650 people north of San Diego in Alpine, California. The fire was started by a cigarette that was tossed from a vehicle in fierce Santa Ana winds.
- ❖ On November 10, 2002 a discarded cigarette caused a 3-alarm fire that forced 180 elderly residents to evacuate their senior housing complex in Johnston, RI. A firefighter broke both legs and ankles in rescue efforts while he battled the blaze at Pocasset Lodge Retirement Residence.
- ❖ On November 24, 2001 shortly before 2 a.m., a fire caused by careless smoking broke out in Shoreview, MN killing one woman and leaving 200 homeless.

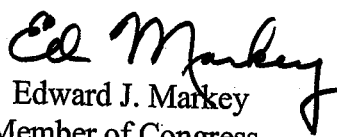
Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. In fact, fires ignited by cigarettes are the leading cause of fire deaths in this country. **Each year, cigarette ignited fires cause more than 900 deaths, 2,400 injuries and over \$400 million in property damages.** Many of these victims are innocent children and senior citizens. Today the technology exists to produce cigarettes that will not readily ignite if they accidentally fall on a chair, a rug, or a bed. To save thousands of lives, all we need to do is set a reasonable ignition standard for cigarettes.

Soon we will introduce legislation that carries the name of our former colleague Joe Moakley. For over 20 years he carried the torch for burn victims, firefighters, and every family member who experienced the profound loss of a loved one whose life may have been saved if we had set standards for the production of cigarettes. It is well past time that Congress acted with Joe Moakley's foresight to bring this preventable carnage to an end.

Like Joe Moakley's earlier bills, our bill does not include pre-emption to the states. (This bill is substantively identical to H.R. 4607.) Several states have been moving ahead with ignition standards in the absence of federal action. New York has already passed a state law on this subject and hopefully the regulations will be implemented on the first of the year. Similar legislation is moving forth in Massachusetts and several other legislatures.

Together we can save thousands of lives and prevent the tremendous pain of thousands more burn victims if we act prudently and quickly. If you would like to cosponsor this bipartisan bill, please contact Kate Reinhalter with Rep. Markey at 5-2836 ([katharine.reinhalter@mail.house.gov](mailto:katharine.reinhalter@mail.house.gov)) or Kevin Fogarty with Rep. Peter King at 5-7896 ([kevin.fogarty@mail.house.gov](mailto:kevin.fogarty@mail.house.gov)). **The deadline to be an original co-sponsor is September 30, 2003.**

Sincerely,

  
Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress

  
Peter King  
Member of Congress